Investigator Searches in Vain for a Penitent German

No Sign of Reformation

Interviews With Teuton Leaders Cast Interesting Light Upon This Subject

IMMEDIATELY after the armistice an enterprising Belgian officer named Maurice Berger went into Germany in a semi-official capacity and secured a series of interviews with prominent generals, capitalists, authors and politicians of all shades of opinion. The book of his impressions has been translated by Mr. William L. McPherson and is published by G. P. Putnam's sons under the title "Germany After the Armistice."

Lieutenant Berger is an ideal interviewer, quick in his perceptions, sensible and direct in his questions. He possesses a remarkable faculty for interpreting a man's personality in a few apt, descriptive phrases. He failed to meet Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, but he succeeded in interviewing almost every one else of consequence in Republican Germany.

On the whole, the author's testimony does not reveal a proper state of contrition in the Teutonic mind. Only Maximilian Harden and a few Independent Socialist leaders frankly admit Germany's responsibility in connection with the origin of the war and the atrocities committed on land and sea by the Teutonic forces. General Kluck, with truly German ineptitude, reminds the author of his country's rapid recovery after Jena and truculently warns the Allies not to go too far with their "peace of violence." General Böhn and Colonel Klewitz, the two officers principally concerned in the destruction of Louvain, justify their conduct and even have the impudence to refer to the sacking of the city as a pitched battle.

Of course, these men are avowed militarists, but the civilians whom Lieutenant Berger interviewed displayed much the same spirit. Herr Stinnes, a great industrial magnate, refers to the destruction of Louvain as "a regrettable misfortune." The author's spirited, although courteous, presentation of the Allied case is met by flat denials of Germany's war guilt, by efforts to minimize the wanton destruction created by the German armies, by counter accusations against the Allies on the score of the blockade and the retention of the German prisoners in France.

True, there is a brighter side to the picture. The well known Socialist theorists, Kautsky and Bernstein, together with the Independent Socialist, Haase, who was assassinated last fall, frankly and unequivocally condemn the policy of the imperial government and admit Germany's obligation to make reparation for its crimes. Even more heroic is the figure of Karl Liebknecht, who opposed the war almost single-handed in the days of Germany's greatest success, and who died fighting to make Germany a genuinely Socialist, anti-militarist republic. The sketches of Liebknecht and of his companion in death, the great-hearted Rosa Luxemburg, although not based upon first-hand acquaintance, are very finely done. The 100,000 workers who followed Liebknecht's body to its grave, the same men, no doubt, who broke Kapp by the general strike, indicate that the best hope of Germany's ultimate moral regeneration lies in its radical working class.

The book is provided with a preface by Baron Beyens, former Belgian Minister to Germany. The translator sums up the merits of Lieutenant Berger's work very adequately in his introduction when he says:

"The author takes credit merely for having produced a veracious stenographer's report. He has done more. He has offered us a picture of the Germany of to-day, skillfully drawn and of permanent historical value."

A Dead Man's Tale

Corpse Furnishes Clew to Mysterious Crime

THE old pirates' maxim that dead men tell no tales is disproved by an acute Chilean detective in "The Whispering Dead," by Alfred Ganachilly. (Knopf.) The German Embassy in the Chilean capital burns down, and there is much evidence to shaw that a charred body found in its ruins is that of Wilhelm Beckert, chancellor of the embassy. But Señor Rosas, of the Chilean Secret Service, has a different theory about the origin of the crime and the identity of the body. His theory is confirmed, grimly enough, out of the dead man's own lips—for an examination of the teeth reveals the fact that the corpse is not Beckert.

The story combines the attractions of mystery and adventure, for after Señor Rosas has discovered the true criminal the task of catching him remains, and this task involves a long, hard chase over the snow-covered Andes and a certain amount of gunplay. It cannot be said that the interest and merit of the novel are enhanced by the constant attempts of the author to preach a sermon on the evils of German "kultur." There is a certain element of dimenovelish melodrama in such sentences as:

"As long as the snow is white upon the Andes the name of Germany will stink in the nostrils of the people of Chile, and the voice of the contemner of Prussianism is the voice of a dead man who, by and through a toothless mouth, whispered the guilt of the German into the quick ears of the law—a law that fears not to pull the beards of ambassadors nor to drag the cagles of ruthlessness from their ridiculous perch nor to pluck the all-highest from his bombastic throne."

But aside from such declamatory ebullitions "The Whispering Dead" is a good story, well calculated to hold the interest of the most hardened reader of detective "thrillers" from the first page to the last.

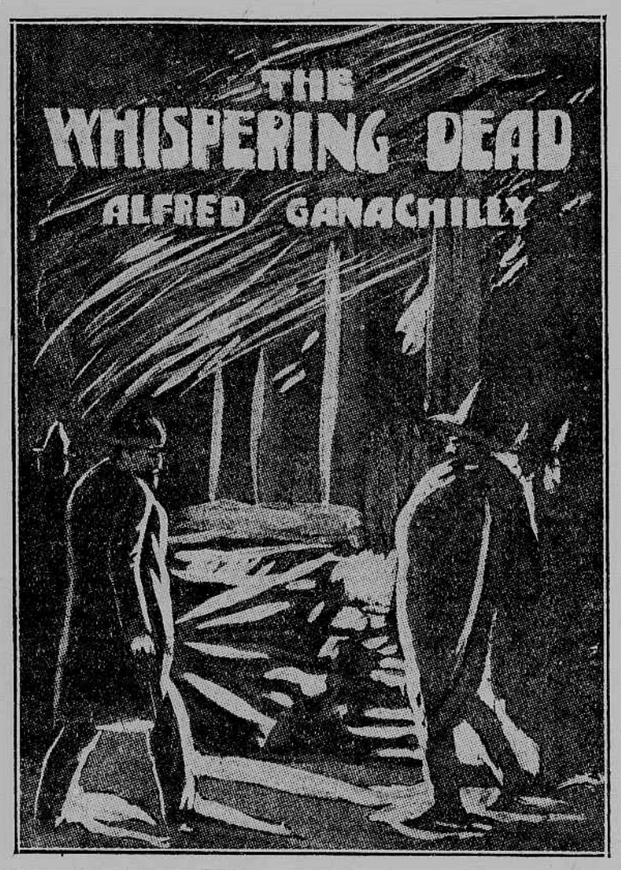
A Cub and a Crime

Reporter Hero of Murder Mystery

THE newspaper reporter who acts as detective, shadowing a criminal and solving a mystery, is not new in fiction. Louis Dodge, in his "Whispers" (Scribner's), has succeeded in approaching the problem of the cub and the crime from an angle hitherto unused as a means of attack. He brings his youthful Sherlock Holmes into the heart of a great Western city and into the dining room of a second-rate lodging house just in time to take a seat at a table and come instantly face to face with two young strangers who are involved in the murder of a certain queer old miser. Why are these fictional aged hoarders of gold always strange, bizarre, in these murder stories?

The reporter scents crime in a manner that stamps him at once as a chap with an almost inhuman nose for a smell of evil, and he gets to his job on the moment. As a new man on the staff of "The Vidette," a local daily struggling to win headway against its more prosperous rival, "The News," he receives rather scant consideration at the outset, especially when he asserts that he can lay the assassin of old Drum by the heel within twenty-four hours.

How "Whispers" (that's his nickname, thanks to his weak voice) tracks the murderer to his lair on a deathbed and saves a chap who is under suspicion is all told in this sensational but rather meaty yarn. We say "meaty," for it is blessed by the exclusion of any fat and clogging motif.



COVER design of "The Whispering Dead," by Alfred Ganachilly, published by Alfred A. Knopf

Mysterious Flames

Hamilton Cleek Foils Widespread and Diabolical Plot

HAMILTON CLEEK, hero of "The Riddle of the Frozen Flame," by M. E. and T. W. Henshaw (Doubleday, Page), "that most magical of men," a sleuth who might fit better between paper covers, solves a riddle that balks the reader's credulity. The telling of the riddle is called, by its authors, "a very remarkable story," "very clever, isn't it?" and "very excellent and intricate work."

Mr. Gustave Brellier, "spitting forth fury in a Flemish patois," tries to get all the gold sovereigns out of England by packing them in electrical fixture tubes and shipping them in fishing boats from an English coast village to his brother Adolph in Belgium. From his electrical fixture factory this mole burrows some miles of subterranean passages under meadows, or fens, of the neighborhood to a spot where the Frozen Flames twinkle every night.

"The Frozen Flames" is, we are told, a "very theatrical name" for marsh-gas lights appearing over the fens. These are used by ingenious Mr. Brellier to camouflage motor cars coming from all points in England with stolen sovereigns for packing and exporting. The tunnels also connect this spot with Brellier's rented house, Withersby Hall, as well as nearby Merriton Towers. Sir Nigel Merriton owns the latter place. His butler has been bought off by Brellier. When Sir Nigel returns from the army and India he learns that various villagers have been "swallowed up" by the Frozen Flames.

Dacre Wynne, a guest at Merriton Towers, also disappears in the flames and Sir Nigel is charged with his death, when Cleek, the "master mind" detective, gets on the job, because poor Sir Nigel discharged his revolver out of his bedroom window to try the hammer with a pot shot at the mysterious flames. Cleek alone can explain the "flames" as burning marsh-gas, and at first sight expounds them in all-wise, pseudo-scientific terms.

In love with Antoinette Brellier, a visiting niece of the conspirator, with her "roguish greeny-gray eyes," poor Sir Nigel is tried for Dacre Wynne's death, and while his trial is pending Cleek cleverly learns the truth about Brellier's methods: Dacre and the others were shot by Brellier's guards for getting too inquisitive about his camouflage screen—the Frozen Flames, out on the fens. Cleek dramatically discloses his information in the nick of time in court and saves poor Sir Nigel—an innocent man who originally called Cleek on this case.

Sir Nigel is later married to Antoinette Brellier, the beast's niece, and Hamilton Cleek, the detective, is best man!

All of this, of course, is told backwards, as a riddle should be told. It will be found engaging by those who are given to accepting and enjoying illogical and improbable "mystery" stories. It would make a good movie—as good movies go.

Huebsch Reprints

B. W. Huebsch has published reprints of three works by E. D. Morel, the well known British Liberal and internationalist. Of the three books, "Red Rubber" is an exposure of the appalling atrocities perpetrated upon the natives in the Congo. "Africa and the Peace of Europe" is a discussion of the proper solution of the African problem. "Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy" is a pre-Wilsonian plea for "open covenants openly arrived at."

Life Story of a Negro Leader

Major Moton Displays a Preference for Well Trodden Paths

By Rebecca Drucker

JUST as all literature must have begun with the hero singing his exploits around the camp fire, so by some strong, sound, subconscious impulse the negro is beginning his literature with autobiography. The injunction would seem to lie upon each of his leaders mark his stake in progress with his own story, and in these tales in Booker T. Washington's "Up From Slavery" and W. E. B. DuBois's "Darkwater" are the sagas of the American negro.

Major Robert Russa Moton's obedience to the command has not resulted in a story so striking and original as these autobiographies. It is not only that he is not so dynamic in self-expression as either of these men. Quite clearly he is also not so powerful or unique an individuality as they. Nevertheless, "Finding a Way Out" (Doubleday Page) is an illuminating recital for the sidelights it throws on the negro's internal problem and the quality of leadership by which he abides. And since, consciously or not, autobiography is a mercilessly searching process, it is also a revealing piece of self-portraiture.

Moton is undoubtedly a natural leader. He had, even in his formative period, an arresting presence and the high vitality of physical power. He was a natural orator and something of a natural politician. He had also the advantage of being born in the household of a white family, where he learned early the power of education.

Finding a way out appears not to have been so difficult for him since, on the whole, he seems to have followed the way of least resistance. Industry and perseverance were, to an extent, natural to him. At Hampton Institute he assimilated thoroughly its theory of educating the negro along industrial lines. He was thoroughly adaptable to the prejudices he lived among, and this pragmatism gave him a great prestige with white and black. It had for a great body of his own people, timid through long enslavement, fearful of hostility and anxious to gain a foothold, the merit of appearing practical advice. And it recommended itself to well-intentioned whites, who hoped to see the negro problem adjusted without any radical shifting of preconceptions. He became the apostle of the slow advance, a member of that wing of the negro thought which determines to ignore with a persistent optimism the prejudice against the negro. It was an attitude which made him many friends among the well-intentioned Northern philanthropists who made the negro their care. In 1901 they urged upon him a trip to Europe for purposes of study and recreation, from which he seems to have returned with the least possible number of impressions, save only that he would rather be a negro in the U. S. A. than anybody else in any other country in the world.

His agreement with Dr. Washington's policy of educating the negro slowly and chiefly along industial lines, his acknowledgment of subservience, made him the logical successor of Dr. Washington at Tuskegee. But the basis of this agreement between them was entirely different. With Dr. Washington it was an intellectual policy pursued as the only condition of the negro's survival under hostile conditions. He had founded Tuskegee in the face of tremendous antagonism, and he was prepared to conciliate every white prejudice to keep it alive.

With Dr. Moton there seems, however, no intellectual basis for this attitude. His reactions are those of a rather insensitive, unimaginative man to whom inequalities are no good. This is best illustrated by the naïve story with which he points the differences between Indians and negroes as he observed them in Hampton. At Hampton was an Indian boy, Paul Natches, the son of an Indian chief who was killed by General Miles for treachery. General Miles, on a visit to the school, heard of the boy's presence there and asked to see him. When the boy came up to him General Miles offered him his hand, which the boy refused to take. Says Moton: "The General lectured him on his stubbornness, telling him that his father might have been of great service to his race but for his indomitable and unconquerable stubbornness, which undoubtedly Paul had inherited. I was very much humiliated. I made up my mind to punish this young man very severely, and evidently General Miles knew it, though I said nothing. After I had dismissed Paul the General turned to me and said, 'Do not punish him. He inherits that spirit. It can never be got out of him.' As soon as I had an opportunity I called Paul in. When he walked into the office he said: 'I ready go guard house. I stay there thousand years, never shake hands wid him. He killed my father.'" Apparently the brutality and stupidity of facing the boy with his father's executioner had not occurred to any one there, least of all to Major Moton.

His book abounds in naive and ingenuous incidents like this. It reveals a man of definite limitations of intellect and imagination, but a man who is by his acceptance of the catch-phrases of the modern white world able to translate them to the negro. It makes comprehensible the break in negro thought which occurred some years ago in which a more radical wing under Dr. DuBois's leadership revolted from the complacency and opportunism of its orthodox leaders, from the whole conception of educating the negro to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water and from the general implied admission of a race inferiority.

As a part of the negro's discussion of himself, "Finding a Way Out" is an extremely interesting chapter in his progress to self-consciousness.

Swinburne

Intimate Anecdotes of Famous Poet

COULSON KERNAHAN'S little book, "Swinburne as I Knew Him" (Lane), contains a number of intimate anecdotes that cast considerable light upon the poet's habits and personality. The author seems to attach a rather excessive degree of importance to four hitherto unpublished letters from Swinburne to his cousin, Lady Henniker-Heaton, which he places at the beginning of the volume. Only one of these letters, in which the poet refuses to take part in the christening of a child on the ground of his strong repugnance to the religious conception of an infant as "born in sin" possesses any genuine intrinsic interest.

Mr. Kernahan's anecdotes, however, are never dull and are often extremely amusing. He tells how Swinburne was cured of excessive drinking through the instrumentality of his faithful friend and mentor, Watts-Dunton. By painting enticing pictures of the virtues of the succcessive beverages Watts-Dunton lured his friend from brandy to port, from port to burgundy, from burgundy to claret, from claret to English beer. Here the process of reformation seems to have stopped. One is tempted to wonder whether in America Watts-Dunton's persuasive eloquence would have led Swinburne to become an enthusiast over grape juice and sarsaparilla.

Swinburne must have led his sedate and faithful companion Watts-Dunton a difficult life at times. Here is a characteristic prank of Swinburne and a friend, both in a somewhat exhilarated condition, in the cloakroom of a fashionable club, as described by the blind poet, Philip Marston:

"Hastily collecting the hats from the pegs, the two strayed revelers placed them on the floor in two long parallel lines. Then Swinburne and his friend, each standing on his right foot at the end of one row of hats, his left ankle clasped in his left hand, the word, 'One, two, three—go!' was given, and away in a wild single-footed frog's dance the two racers went, each hop meaning the pancaking of a hat.

"Which won, I don't know, but when the scandalized attendant arrived it was to find Swinburne and his friend breathless, and executing a triumphant war-dance amid a chaos of crushed hats on the cloakroom floor. The committee, interrupted in their sitting, hastily adjourned the meeting to the cloakroom. Here they found Swinburne and his friend, screaming with laughter over what each conceived to be a gigantic joke. Failing to see the joke, the committee hastily held an emergency meeting then and there, to pass unanimously a resolution expelling the two offending members from the club."

The book has a more serious as well as a lighter side; it describes some of Swinburne's literary likes and dislikes, together with his vivid and impassioned manner of expressing them.